GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:699
ANSWERED ON:27.11.2006
RANKING OF TIGER RESERVES
Mandal Shri Sanat Kumar

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Tiger Reserves in the country presently;

(b) whether the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources has made any ranking of Tiger Reserves in the country;

(c) if so, the rank of Sunderbans Tiger Reserve therein and the criteria followed by the said organization in such ranking of Tiger Reserves;

(d) whether any shortcomings have been reported in such ranking; and

(e) if so, the details thereof and the remedial steps taken/being taken by the Government for improvement of Sunderbans Tiger Reserve?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA)

(a) There are 28 tiger reserves in the country presently.

(b) & (c) Yes, Sir. The Tiger reserves have been assessed by a panel of independent experts based on 45 parameters using the format of the World Commission on Protected Areas of the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN). The assessment reports have been peer reviewed by the IUCN. Based on the above assessment, Sunderban Tiger Reserve has been categorized as 'Very good'.

In all, 45 parameters have been used to assss the evaluation elements pertaining to planning, inputs, processes and outputs in each Tiger Reserve. The scoring criteria on each individual parameter have been standardized in the methodology to reduce subjectivity of the evaluation and have been assessed quantitatively to arrive at a composite score for each Reserve. The composite score is then assessed on a scale of 4 grades: Very Good, Good, Satisfactory and Poor. These parameters are meant to assess the management effectiveness of each Reserve and have been adapted to the Indian context from the Management Effectiveness Assessment Framework (MEAF) provided by the World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA).

(d) & (e) Lack of applied research in a number of fields, lack of better amenities for staff and illegal fishing in core area, honey collection, irregular and incomplete immunization of village cattle, delay in payment of ex-gratia/compensation for human deaths and cattle kills due to carnivores are main shortcomings observed during evaluation. However, the steps taken by Government of India for conservation of wild animals in the country including Sunderbans Tiger Reserve are at Annexure-I.

Annexure Referred To In Reply To Part (D) & (E) Of The Lok Sabha Unstarred Question No. 699 Regarding Ranking Of Tiger Reserves Due For Reply On 27.11.2006.

Steps taken by the government for protection and conservation of tigers and other wildlife in country are as under:

(i) Legal protection has been provided to wild animals against hunting and commercial exploitation under the provisions of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.

(ii) Several rare and endangered species of wild animals have been included in the Schedules of Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, thereby giving it highest degree of protection.

(iii) The Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 has been amended and made more stringent. The punishment in cases of offences has been enhanced. The Act also provides for forfeiture of any equipment, vehicle or weapon that has been used for committing any wild life offence.

(iv) Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has been empowered under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 to apprehended and prosecute wildlife offenders.

(v) Government of India has set up Regional and Sub-regional Offices for wildlife preservation in major export and trade centers of the country to prevent smuggling of wild animals and their products.

(vi) Financial and technical help is provided to the States under various Centrally Sponsored Schemes, viz. Project Tiger, Project Elephant and Development of National Parks and Sanctuaries for enhancing the capacity and infrastructure of the States for providing effective protection to wild animals.

(vii) A National Wildlife Action Plan 2002-16 was adopted by the Indian Board for Wild Life under the chairmanship of Prime Minister in January 2002. The plan outlines the strategy for conservation and protection of wildlife in the country.

(viii) Government of India is a signatory to many international conventions concerning biodiversity conservation and control of illegal trade in wild flora and fauna.

(ix) Bilateral agreements have been signed with Nepal and Republic of China for controlling trans-boundary illegal trade in wildlife.

(x) A Global Tiger Forum of Tiger Range Countries has been created for addressing international issues related to tiger conservation.

(xi) Action has been taken for implementing the urgent recommendation of Tiger Task Force. The Wildlife (Protection) Amendment Act, 2006 has been enacted and the National Tiger Conservation Authority has been created w.e.f. 4th September, 2006, based on the enabling provisions in the said Act. Action has also been taken for creating the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau.